

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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S E C R E T PHNOM PENH 4931

EXDIS

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: MOPS CB

SUBJECT: POTENTIAL IMPACT OF DETERIORATING MILITARY POSTURE AT
NEAK LUONG ON PHNOM PENH DEFENSE

REF: PHNOM PENH 4831

1. IN PARA 9 OF REFTTEL I OPINED THAT THE FALL OF THE ENCLAVE
AT THE FERRY CROSSING ON THE WEST BANK OF THE MEKONG OPPOSITE
NEAK LUONG MIGHT FREE SOME KC MILITARY UNITS WHICH COULD BE
MOVED UP TO ATTACK THE SOUTHEASTERN PERIMETER OF PHNOM PENH.

2. WE NOW HAVE INFORMATION FROM SENSITIVE SOURCES TO THE EFFECT
THAT THE ENTIRE 12TH KC BRIGADE, WHICH HAS BEEN FIGHTING ON
THE WEST BANK OPPOSITE NEAK LUONG, HAS BEEN ORDERED TO MOVE
NORTH AND LEAVE BEHIND ONLY A FEW ELEMENTS TO MAINTAIN CONTROL
OVER THE WEST BANK OF THE LOWER MEKONG. THE 12TH KC BRIGADE
IS ESTIMATED TO HAVE ABOUT 3,000 MEN. WE ANTICIPATE
THAT THEY WILL BE ORDERED TO MOVE INTO THE BASSAC
CORRIDOR AREA, WHICH IS LOCATED ON THE SOUTHEASTERN
PERIMETER OF PHNOM PENH. THIS IN TURN WOULD PERMIT
THE KC 11TH BRIGADE, PRESENTLY IN THE BASSAC AREA, TO
SLIDE WESTWARD FROM WHERE IT COULD INCREASE PRESSURE ON
THE SOUTHERN PERIMETER OF PHNOM PENH. THE LATTER AREA
IS ONLY VERY LIGHTLY DEFENDED BY THE FANK'S FIRST
DIVISION, WHICH IS DRASTICALLY UNDERSTRENGTH AND

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CERTAINLY CANNOT MUSTER MORE THAN THE EQUIVALENT OF

ONE UNDER STRENGTH BRIGADE.

3. IN SHORT, I THINK WE MUST BE PREPARED FOR INCREASED
ENEMY PRESSURE AGAINST A PORTION OF THE PHNOM PENH
PERIMETER WHICH HAS HERETOFORE BEEN RELATIVELY QUIET.
IT WILL ALSO UNDEOUBTEDLY REQUIRE REPOSITIONING OF FANK
UNITS TO COUNTER THE NEW THREAT. THE ANSWER TO ALL
THESE PROBLEMS REMAINS INCREASED TROOP STRNGTH IN THE
FANK INTERVENTION UNITS. UNFORTUNATELY, THE GKR IS NOT
RECRUITING FAST ENOUGH OR SCARFING UP DESERTERS WITH
SUFFICIENT SEVERITY TO MATCH THE COMBINED TOTAL OF
FANK CASUALTIES AND DESERTERS.
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